The Woman's Page of The Times-Dispatch

Which Gossips Most, Man or Woman?

That woman has not naturally and persistently been entitled to the credit of being a greater newsmonger than man is apparent from the fact that in every old English village where there was a gossip there was also a gaffer, the feminine and masculine distinction indicating the existence of the two classes that equally enjoyed the discussion of their neighbors' affairs among their respective cronies.

In early American days the men were pioneers, too strenuously occupied in establishing their claim to the land to indulge in the lighter phases of existence. The women were the helpers of men, and thus found no opportunity for gossip. But after a while things changed for the easier, and social life in the colonies soon reflected the latest and wittiest sayings of the Court of St. James and the London clubs.

Coffee House Centres.

In Richmond, almost immediately after it became the State capital, coffee houses came into prominence, Lynch's, on Main Street, being a centre, where politicians met and discussed points of interest. But the gossip at Lynch's was purely political, not social. Men of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were most punctilious about the mention of women's names in public places. And the women—dear, homekeeping souls—their gossip was harmless enough. A new recipe for a fashionable kind of bread, named Sally Lunn, after the woman who originated it; some cuttings from the chrysanthemums flourishing in the garden of a great river mansion, and the pattern of a pelisse sent over by the last ship arriving from London, and therefore monstrously fashionable, furnished matter in plenty to occupy them indefinitely.

Difficult to Decide.

There are women's clubs and men's clubs in the progressive Richmond of to-day, and if they were to be adjudged it might be a difficult matter to decide which serve as most delectable places for the dissemination of rumors and realities, retailed as the witty utterances of those who observe much and are willing to make the world around them richer in knowledge of others through their observation powers.

Not all gossip is malicious or reprehensible. Many men and women are inclined by nature to absorb news about other people as naturally as plants absorb moisture and sunshine. When the human plants are saturated they give off what they have acquired as readily as the plants. Frequently this class of humanity enlivens the giving off process by wit that is as amusing as it is harmless.

There are gossips and gossips. But when the source of much that they tell is sought for it can as often be traced to members of one sex as the other. Possibly this is because there has arisen a leisure class among young American men, who, in default of more serious pursuits, render themselves agreeable by retailing the latest bon mot or the raciest joke that is going the rounds of clubdom.

Among the women there is the bridge table and the card devotee, who aspires to being considered au fait in regard to spicy tidbits, told at first hand over the cards by her to animated and eager listeners. Such a woman is as proud of advancing her reputation by arousing a new sensation as an artist might be of unveiling a finished piece of work.

The Lighter and Graver Side.

Reference to the lighter side of gossip only has been made. That there is a graver point of view cannot be denied. But gossip of this character is entitled to another name, and, if properly classified, comes under the head of scandal.

In the meanwhile, men gossips no longer cry their wares aloud with a tap of their bejeweled snuffboxes, and women no longer entertain coteries at routs or assemblies. But gossips of both sexes are perennial and have their uses in the complex organization of society.

Dickens and His Son.

Forty-five years ago, a keen, pleasant-faced man, in a green velvet waistcoat, might have been seen on the platform at Waterloo Station, London. At his side was a young fellow of twenty, his face flushed with emotion.

"Good-by, my boy, and God bless you," spoke the elder man. "Do your duty and keep up your pluck."

The young man thought of all the good times he had had with his father—of all the wonderful talks and games and journeys they had enjoyed together, he and the best, the kindest father in all the world—and tears sprang to his eyes. The two gripped hands again, and the train steamed away, and that night England and London and Rochester and Gad's Hill were shut out for forty-five years, while the young man worked and dreamed and hoped in the Australian bush. The elder man was Charles Dickens; the younger was his son, Alfred Tennyson Dickens, godson of the poet laureate. From that hour the famous novelist began to labor as he had never labored before. To make provision for his family became his ruling passion. "God knows," he wrote, "it is not for myself, but for those I hold dear and who will come after me."

Forty-five years passed. And then one morning Alfred Tennyson Dickens, no longer young, but with white hair now, arrived in his native London. "When I was in Australia," he says, "my father and I used to correspond with each other regularly. I remember receiving his last letter to me after I had heard the news of his death. In this letter, written only three weeks before his death, he wrote: 'You will doubtless have seen in many of the papers that the Queen is going to bestow all manner of titles and honors upon me, but you can take it from me personally that during my life I shall remain as I sign myself at the end of the letter.' He signed himself plain 'Charles Dickens.'"—From the March Strand.

For Cake Icings.

Icings for cakes may be simply the confectioner's XXXX sugar, mixed with sufficient milk or water to hold its shape well, spreading it on while the cake is yet warm, or it may be made by putting two cupfuls of fine granulated sugar in a saucepan with one-half cupful of cold water, cooking it in exactly the same manner as "French fondant," adding a few grains of cream of tartar when it begins to bubble. As soon as the "soft ball stage" is reached turn it into a dampened bowl to cool; when cold add the beaten white of one egg and the flavoring, and beat the whole until just thick enough to spread. It takes a little practice to get this icing just the right consistency; if beaten too long it will be too stiff to spread smoothly, and if not quite long enough it will run,

NEW SPRING MODELS FOR FOULARD, LINEN AND MARQUISETTE. —L'ART DE LA MODE.

Pavlova's Advice

Anna Pavlova has been giving American women some good advice as to how they may appear graceful. She considers that they are too much given to standing with their heels together, and their shoulders squared like German officers on parade. Through the medium of Harper's Bazar, she speaks thus:

Dear American ladies, you are not very graceful. You are very beautiful, and you wear marvelous toilettes, but you are not exceedingly graceful. I wonder why? Shall I tell you something I have sometimes thought since I came to your country? Grace, real grace, is based on natural, normal, perfect health. I do not mean the robust; I mean the virile, sinuous and supple. The big hips, the fat shoulders, are as unhealthy and unnatural as scrawniness and anemia. Is there anything finer to see, more beautiful, than the absolutely sure grace of any living creature entirely healthy? I think not. Now, you are going to ask me, what have these things I am saying to do with you? Must I make myself plainer? I have just explained that almost any normal, healthy living creature is naturally graceful. Well, then, can you not conceive that an unhealthy and abnormal creature might almost as necessarily be awkward? No, I am not saying that all American women are unhealthy and abnormal, yet, to tell you the truth, it has sometimes occurred to me that a little more work—I mean that definite and healthy occupation—would make the women of your country healthier and happier, more normal and—more graceful.

Rules for Cake Making.

To make cake delicious to taste—light, fine-grained and delicate of crust—good, sweet butter, strictly fresh eggs, the finest of granulated or powdered sugar and the best of pastry flours are absolutely necessary. The operator, too, should be quick, accurate and dainty in her work. As a rule, the slow-motioned, careless and untidy worker does not succeed in making anything more than a very ordinary cake.

CONTRARY TO ALL IDEAS AND EXPECTATIONS

Every woman is a certain sense in a stranger at times, even to those nearest and dearest to her. Her nature may seem to be as open as the sunshine. Her happy surrounrings may free her from the slightest suspicion of secrecy, or the necessity of it.

Then suddenly she confronts a crisis, such as may arise in the life of any woman. But the attitude of this one woman is a distinct shock and a surprise. She goes contrary to all idea and expectation formed concerning her. She draws a line which no one can pass and shuts herself away from all approach behind it. Her actions are quite as incomprehensible and disappointing to her closest intimates and relatives, as they might be to those least affiliated with her by ties of blood, or by a community of interests.

There is a foolish and yet a pathetic old song which talks about the futile years which some women spend beside their husbands, and asks the question—

"Why thus joined, why ever met,
If they must be strangers yet?"

The manner of the question is inconsequent, but the sentiment of the lines holds more than a hint of truth, and very sorrowful truth it is. Of all separations the most sorrowful is that which comes in life. Death cannot be compared to it, for death is a going before, not an absolute finality in parting.

The Point Where It Begins.

Women's natures are complex. Many enter into marriage as mere girls. When they develop into womanhood they are astonished to find that their interests, inclinations and preferences lead them away from, instead of into, the same circle with the men they have chosen as their life-long comrades.

It is impossible to predict what a woman may or may not do under such circumstances. She may quietly acquiesce in the consequences of her early mistake. But in so doing she may draw more and more into the recesses of her own nature, and, while there is no open disagreement or contention between husband and wife, there can be but little mutual sympathy and understanding. She may refuse to accept restrictions that she has forged for herself, and may demand her freedom, feeling that she can better achieve her destiny unshackled than bound. Or she may, like the majority of women, conclude that a "half loaf is better than no loaf," and may content herself with less than she has hoped for in the way of happiness.

Meet and Pass as Strangers.

Whatever may be the decision in the matter, the woman affected by it approaches it, probably, from a standpoint which is least expected. But having justified herself to herself, the opinions and ideas of others rarely have sufficient weight to cause her to change, or to modify the line she has marked out for herself.

Woman is a creature of various moods and whims and fancies. She bewilders man, more practical by nature, disinclined to humor what he reckons as foolishness. And so it is that often, non-comprehending, the two pause awhile in careless greeting and then pass on by divergent roads, having never been anything, the one to the other, but strangers.

New Materials for Spring.

The really new fabric which promises to be the rage is a serge etamine, something like a wool voile in effect. One of the prettiest designs of it is a dark blue, with an eighth-inch white silk stripe set quite far apart and broken every inch or so by tiny black cross stripes.

There is an all-wool marquisette that comes in a wide range of colors and is also decidedly new. Then I nearly forgot one of the most effective, a plain fabric, say black, with its under side a narrow black and white stripe. Think of its possibilities.

Whipcord Serges.

There is nothing more popular than whipcord serges—no relation to diagonals except that the whipcords do run diagonally across the fabric. But these are stanch, closely woven, twilled cords, which speak wonderfully for the dust shelding and wearing qualities of the fabric. A close rival is the very fine French serge. Both of these come in various hues and in black, the smartest being that same midnight blue so successful last year.

The Smartest Blouses.

The smartest of all are the delicate chiffon blouses, embroidered in tiny, round balls, which seem at first glance to be made of wood, but are in reality of tightly wound thread. These are considerably smaller than a pea in size and are worked in a design done in floss silk. They have a chic all their own, and promise entirely new developments, besides being a relief from the eternal beads.

And Still They Grow.

There seems to be no end to the length of earrings; they just grow and grow, but they are none the less attractive, and every one is wearing them. A shape that has become more popular than ever is the plain gold hoop, slightly wider at the top than at the bottom, rechristened the "harvest moon." These are shown in many sizes, but the most suitable seems to be about the size of a 10-cent piece or a little larger. These hoops are shown in jet and stones. In the latter effect I saw a pair of diamonds and sapphires, the latter showing only in the broad part at the bottom, the result very smart and quite effective.

A Present-Day Fad.

One of the present-day fads is the lingerie sachet, which lies at the foot of one's bed and holds the night robe. Almost every fashionable bedroom has one, and they are a graceful feminine fancy, as well as a useful adjunct. In this shop they show the prettiest ones I have seen—heart-shaped and embroidered and delicately inset with lace over a pale color, or white, with a beautiful bow and a pretty satin rose at one side of the top.

Do Your Eyes or Nerves Trouble You

or have you other chronic ailments? Call on DR. FORTNEY, Neurologist, 611 E. Broad Street, for free consultation. Wonderful cures through neurological methods.

Concerning Miss Beaux

Women of to-day are interested in the personality of the individual woman who attains pre-eminence in literature, art, music or makes good along professional and scientific lines.

Anne O'Hagan, writing in Harper's Bazar for March, pays a pretty tribute to Cecilia Beaux, the artist, one that is worth reading. She says, regarding Miss Beaux's looks and character, that tall, slender, straight, with luminous, direct, dark gray eyes, clear skin, a dazzling smile and the gifts of illuminating and witty speech and ready laughter, she is a pre-eminently attractive woman. Miss Beaux would probably explain herself—her artistic genius, the intellectual clarity of its expression and her personal amenity to the code of good society—on the grounds of heredity. Her father was a Provencal and her mother a Puritan, of New England. In one strain are the poetry of her nature, her love of color, her imagination; in the other her interest in the hidden things of the soul; in one lie her artistic gifts, and in the other the ability to direct them.

Her Personal Distinction.

If her genius had not been for painting, continues Anne O'Hagan, one is sure that Miss Beaux must have been a figure and a force in her times by her power of personal distinction alone. More than it is permitted most women, of whatever ancestry, accomplishments or charm, she suggests the good word "lady," as it was in the days before it had fallen into the disrepute of bad company, as it will be in the days of its rehabilitation, now close upon us, according to the language prophets. She suggests—and this quite apart from the memory of her canvases—the fine mind, the deep intuitions, the poise, the delicate reserves of the woman of the highest breeding, the woman who has lived in the broadening and uplifting society of other fine minds, of fine books, fine thoughts and activities. It would be an impossible feat of the imagination to picture her practicing the licenses allowed genius, dropping into slipshod or bizarre habits of dress, speech or intercourse with her fellows.

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Folk-Lore Songs

The introduction into the American educational movement of historical pageants, to inspire the young with enthusiasm regarding the successive important periods in the development of American national growth, has turned the attention of women to folk-lore songs, by which these pageants are charmingly illustrated.

There is a good deal of uncertainty about the origin of "Yankee Doodle," an American folk-lore song of the Revolutionary period. The most accurate authorities ascribe its authorship to Dr. Schuckburgh, a clever and sarcastic surgeon of the English army, who amused himself by exploiting in verse the rawness and awkwardness of the Continentals, as contrasted with the British regulars.

General George Washington was closely associated with this song, which was sung to a popular tune, most probably to an English folk dance. Dr. Schuckburgh used the words of his verses to describe the feelings of an imaginary Colonial youngster, who, accompanying his father to the American camp, saw Washington's army for the first time.

Curiously enough the Americans, instead of resenting the attempted ridicule, adopted "Yankee Doodle" as their own revolutionary air, and marched to its lively strains. Now, its English beginnings have been lost sight of and it has American national prestige. The song originally included a great number of verses. Two of them ran in this way:

"And there was Captain Washington,
Upon a slapping stallion,
A-giving orders to his men;
I guess there were a million.

"And there I saw a little keg,
Its heads were made of leather,
They knocked on it with little sticks
To call the folks together."

CHORUS.

"Yankee Doodle, keep it up,
Yankee Doodle dandy,
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy."

"Leezie Lindsay."

Purely sentimental and beautiful is an old Scotch folk-lore song called "Leezie Lindsay." The song has a delightful tune which doubtless was played on the bagpipes, with the tune in a high key, and one or two low notes drawn out in the bass. "Leezie Lindsay" was wooed by a Highland chieftain, Lord Ronald MacDonald, who says to her, when she disclaims knowledge of his personality:

"O Leezie lass, ye must ken little,
If sae ye dinna ken me,
For my name is Lord Ronald MacDonald,
A chief o' high degree."

This must have satisfied Leezie, for it is further declared of her that:

"She has kilted her skirts of green satin,
She has kilted them up to her knee;
And she's off wi' Lord Ronald Macdonald,
His bride and his darling to be."

Queer-Shaped Parasols.

It is even a bit incongruous to see parasols in the windows and snow on the ground, to see chiffon muffs, with an infinitesimal bit of fur upon them, when the wind is roaring bleakly. But to balance this contrariety, many of the parasols are wintry in fabric and dark in color, and, in addition, they pique the curiosity because they are queer in shape. Those shown so far vie with the shoes of the year in the employment of all sorts of incongruous materials.

Novel Hat Trimmings.

Besides the web-patterned veils with which the shops are fuller than ever, there are to be seen novel hat-trimming features. Those that imitate the long willow plume consist of heavy, full, soft fringe, plain or crinkled, mounted upon a flat and, of course, invisible wire, which is sufficiently substantial to hold the make-believe feather in shape.

Personally, I do not look for popularity for these trimmings—that is, among critical women, though a few exclusive milliners are using them on costly hats. Already very cheap forms of similar imitations have been seen, which have vulgarized them. Still, one never knows how some clever hand may utilize and set in vogue that which before seemed wholly impossible.

Love and Honesty.

It was the woman speaking. "You know I am rich?" she said, half in hope, half in fear.

And the man: "If I had not known it I should not have asked you to marry me."

"You are frank."

"I am honest."

"The same in effect. But why so honest?"

"Honesty is the best policy."

"I despise policy."

"And honesty?"

"I fear it."

"Why fear?"

"Because it reminds me that I have a conscience."

"Have you?"

"I hope so."

"Then why have you so cruelly—I shall not say shamelessly, for it is the nature of women to be coquettish—why have you so cruelly laughed at a dozen men who have thrown themselves at your feet?"

"Because I knew why they did it."

"Because they loved you?"

"No. Because my feet were shod with gold."

"How did you know they did not love you for yourself alone?"

"Because in each instance I told the man I was rich, and he vowed he loved the woman only; the wealth was nothing; he cared for me, not for my money."

"And I?"

"You were honest."

"How do you know?"

"You said you loved me, but would not marry me without the money."

"Lovers say many things."

"Not when what they say means only loss to them."

"And you fear honesty?"

"Yes."

"Because of conscience?"

"Not now."

"No? Then why?"

"It may mean loss to me."

"A selfish reason."

"Yes, for love is the supreme selfishness."

"And you love me?"

"From the beginning."

"Then I need not have been honest?"

"Is not love enough?"

"It is more—with honesty."—W. J. Lampton, in the Smart Set.